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## KidVision screenings use 'cool' machine

*HEALTH FAIR'S NEWEST  
ATTRACTION TESTS  
3- TO 5-YEAR-OLDS*

CHARIS UBBEN  
[cubben@hastingstribune.com](mailto:cubben@hastingstribune.com)

KidVision Hastings, a new partnership between the Hastings Brain Team and Prevent Blindness Nebraska, made its debut at the Vital Signs Health Fair this weekend with free vision screenings for kids ages 3-17.

At a booth inside the fair, children and parents alike were surprised to find the usual lettered eye chart replaced by a Lea Symbols chart containing four shapes, and a high-tech vision screener called the SureSight for younger children.

"I was telling him at home, 'This is probably what they're going to do,' and they said 'No, we've got a cool machine,'" said Amy Kudlacek of Juniata.

"I was expecting it to just be the chart with the letters," she added, looking at the Lea Symbols chart. "This is cool, with the little shapes."

Kudlacek brought her 4-year-old son, Carson, for a screening Saturday morning, when volunteers from Wholistic Therapy Services and Speech, Language & Learning Place were manning the KidVision table.

"Didn't really have any concerns, just thought it'd be something fun for him to do while we were getting our blood checked," Kudlacek said.

KidVision volunteers and Prevent



AMY ROH/Tribune

**Logan Walther, 5, is given a strabismus eye test Saturday at the KidsVision booth during the Vital Signs Health Fair at the Adams County Fairgrounds.**

Blindness Nebraska program director Carmen Bunde used the SureSight on Carson because he fit the age guideline of 3-5 years. The \$5,000 SureSight was purchased this December with grants from Hastings Kiwanis and South Heartland District Health Department.

The ability to test 3- to 5-year-olds is important, said Franc E. Wagner, Hastings Brain Team president, because many kids have no vision help until the required screening in kindergarten. Until this partnership began, KidVision had been screening eyes and training screeners primarily in Omaha, where the agency is based.

"They've not been able to have screenings and things west of Omaha, so Brain Team is the organization that has gotten the SureSight and we've gotten trained and are trying to offer it in the western part of the state," Wagner said.

Trained screeners through KidVision are all volunteers. Bunde also hopes to



rain school nurses on the Lea Symbols chart, which she said is perfect for young, illiterate and non-English speakers.

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**Jules Diecker, 7, reads shapes on an eye chart at the KidVision booth at the Vital Signs Health Fair Saturday at the Adams County Fairgrounds.**

## **Health: KidVision screenings debut**

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“If we can get enough people certified and can do it, then we can expand the program out here,” Bunde said. “We’re at the very beginning of this partnership and trying to do more with the Hastings Brain Team.” KidVision screenings were one of two offerings new to Vital Signs this year, along with the Prostate Specific Antigen test. About 150 volunteers worked at the fair, which ran Saturday and Sunday. Though

employer-sponsored testing was down by five businesses this year, the fair still had 2,444 preregistered for its blood chemistry analysis, organizer Karen Doerr said. A total of 2,975 people took the blood chemistry test, while others came to the fair for other reasons. “We easily saw over 3,000 in the course of two days,” Doerr said. “I think it’s a little higher than normal, not sure why. Probably, people realize what a value it is to them.”